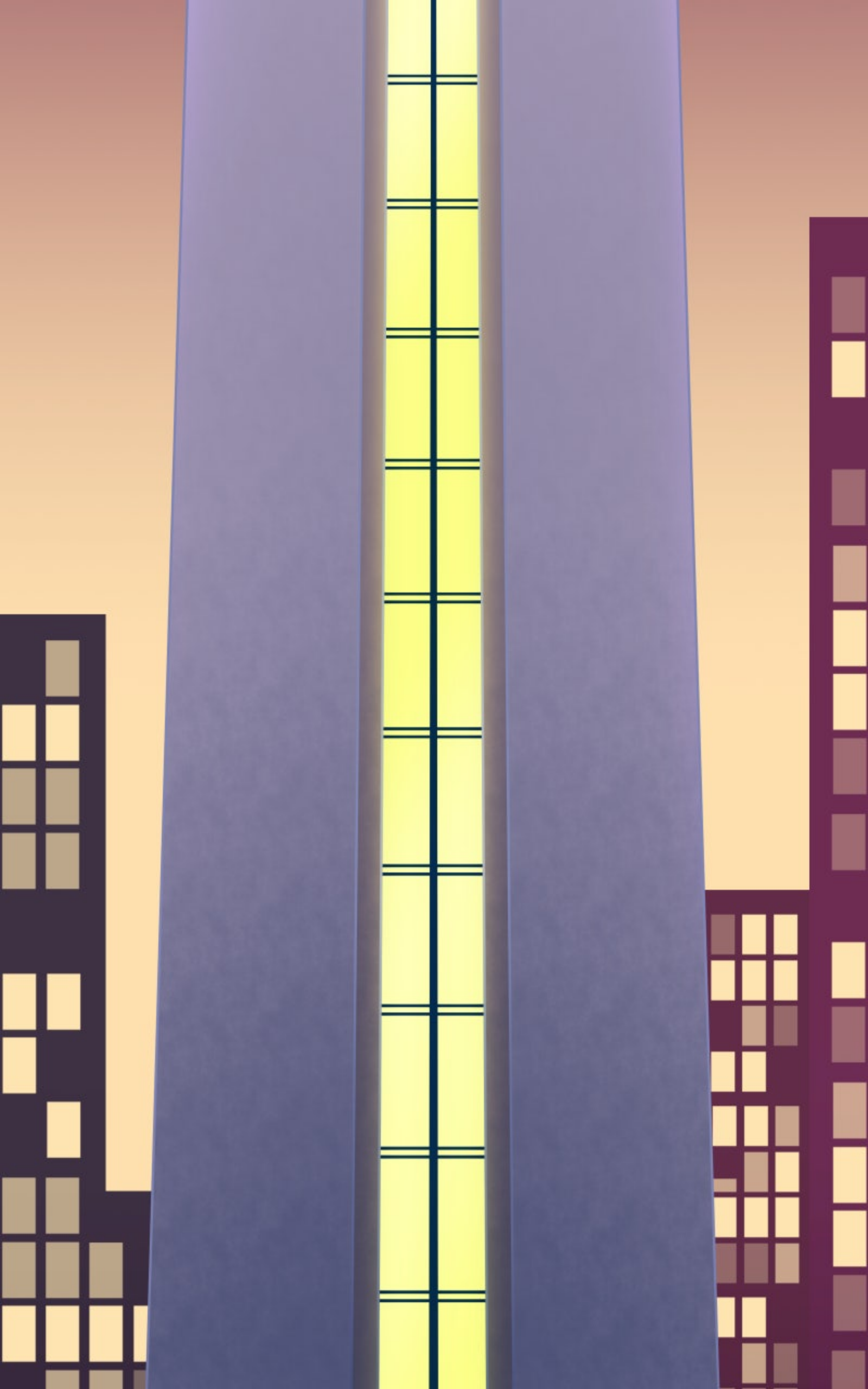
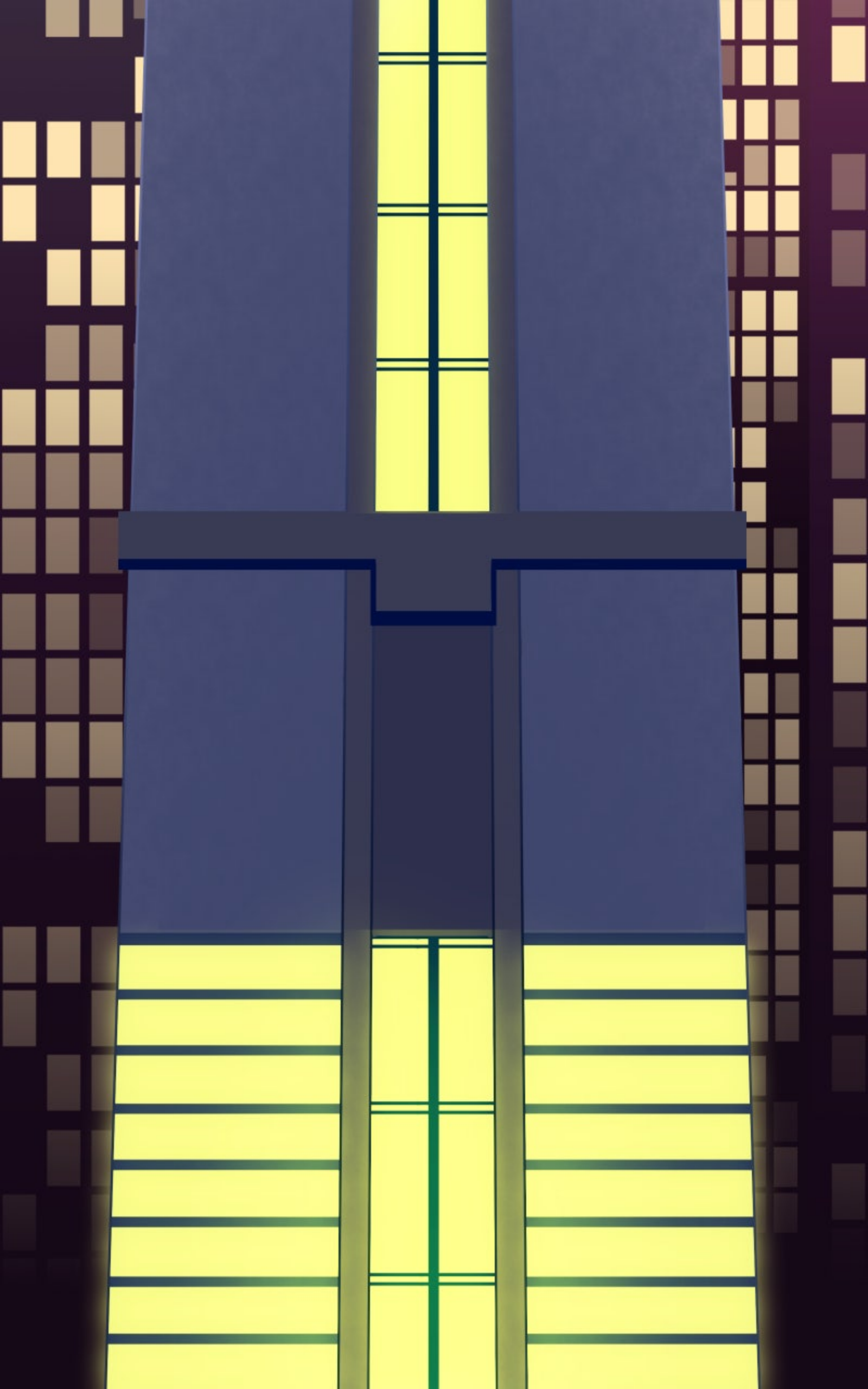










LORENZO, BE
REASONABLE.





Name: Minette
Occupation: Waitress
Location: Little Italy
Info: Curious!
Attractive Female

TASKING SPECIALIZED AGENTS
TO RETRIEVE STOLEN PROPERTY IS
ONE THING, BUT DO YOU REALLY
THINK IT'S WISE TO SEND ARMED MEN
INTO THE STREETS EN MASSE?

THE PUBLIC SUPPORT WE'VE
FOSTERED PROVIDES US A LEVEL OF
PROTECTION WITH THE AUTHORITIES.
RASH ACTIONS LIKE THIS COULD
JEOPARDIZE THAT.





ENOUGH, VITALE...
ENOUGH!

LOOK AT THAT
NEWS REPORT! WE'VE
LOST SOLDIERS, BOY.
MORE THAN WE CAN
AFFORD.

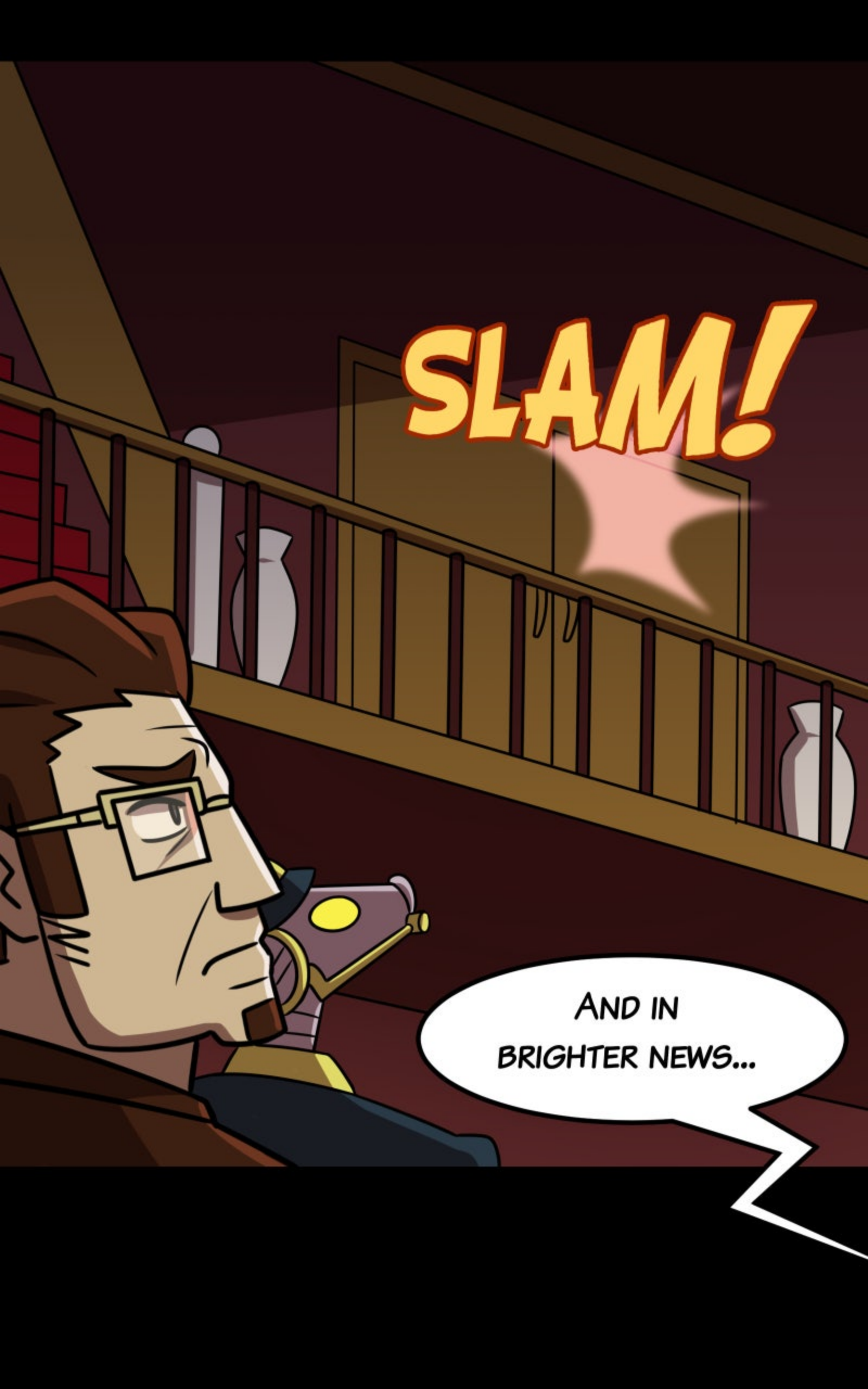
WORD IS EVERY
FAMILY IN MAPLECREST
AFFILIATED WITH THE MEDICI
WERE SLAUGHTERED LIKE
CATTLE. NOT JUST THE MEN,
BUT WOMEN AND KIDS. WE'VE
NEVER BEEN MORE
VULNERABLE!





SO MY PLAN IS
GOING FORWARD WHETHER
YOU WANT IT TO OR NOT.
EITHER GET ON BOARD OR
GET OUT OF THE WAY.





SLAM!

AND IN
BRIGHTER NEWS...

I'M HERE NOW WITH
SOME SURVIVORS FROM
THE TRAGEDY THAT'S BEEN
DUBBED THE MAPLECREST
MASSACRE.

EH?



THESE FORTUNATE FEW
AWOKE TO A NIGHTMARE. ONE THAT FOUND
THEM HELPLESSLY TRAPPED AS THE SKULLGIRL
WREAKED HAVOC ON THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD. BUT
THAT ENDED WHEN THEY WERE RESCUED BY THE
COMBINED EFFORTS OF PRINCESS PARASOUL
AND EMERGENCY PERSONNEL, RELATIVELY, AND
MIRACULOUSLY, UNSCATHED.



MARCUS? NO, IT
ISN'T POSSIBLE. THE
SKULLGIRL DOESN'T
DISCRIMINATE. HOW COULD
THEY HAVE SURVIVED,
UNLESS--

I BEG YOUR
PARDON, MR.
MEDICI?

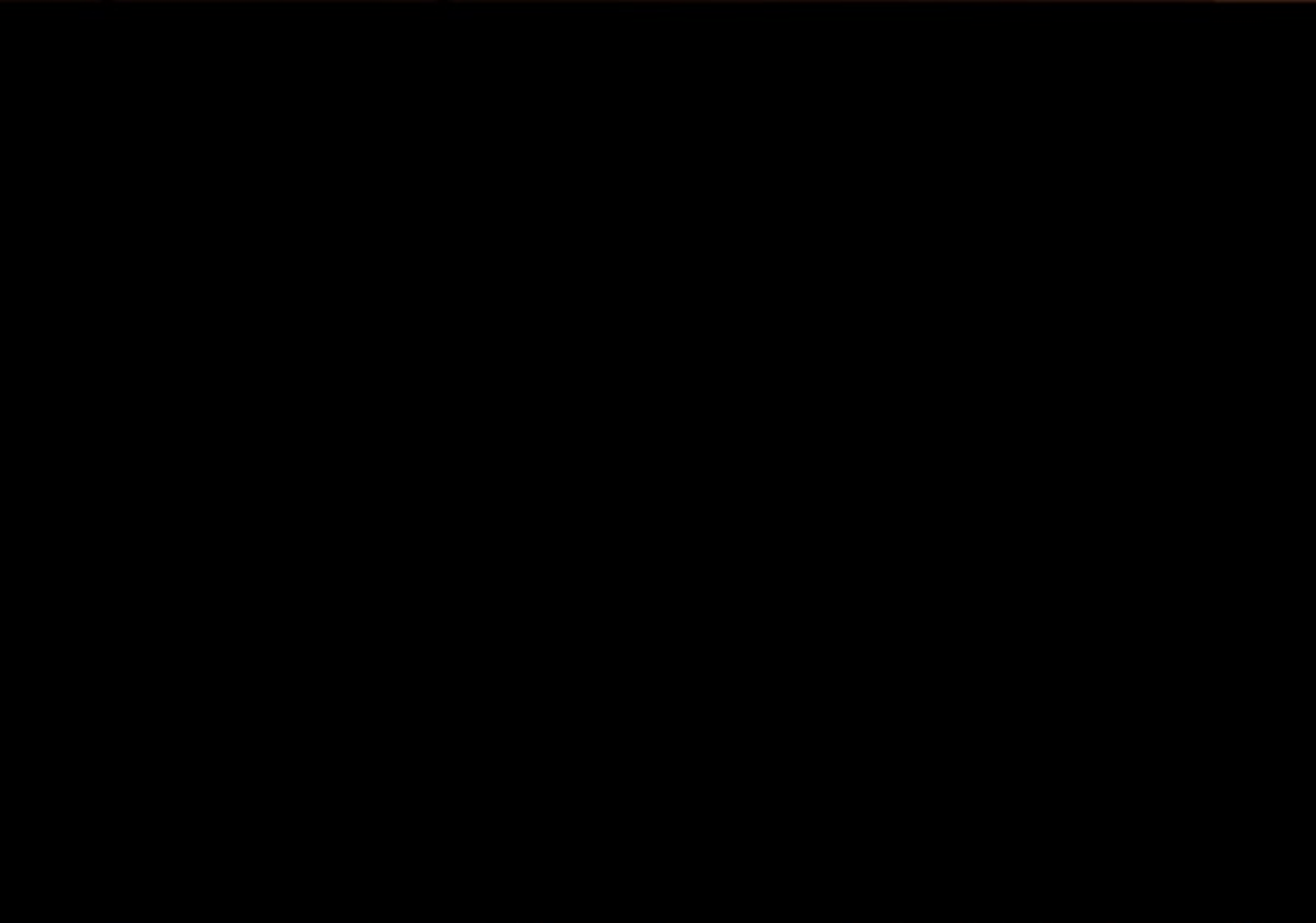
MR. MEDICI'S
MY FATHER.





OTTOMO, YOU'RE
WITH ME. WE'RE
HEADING OUT.





BUT SIR



BUT, SIR...
WHAT ABOUT, UH...
MR. MEDICI?

LORENZO MADE HIS
DECISION. NOT TO WORRY,
HE'LL BE WELL PROTECTED.
BUT IF HE WANTS TO GO HIS
OWN WAY...



I'VE GOT
TO GO MINE.

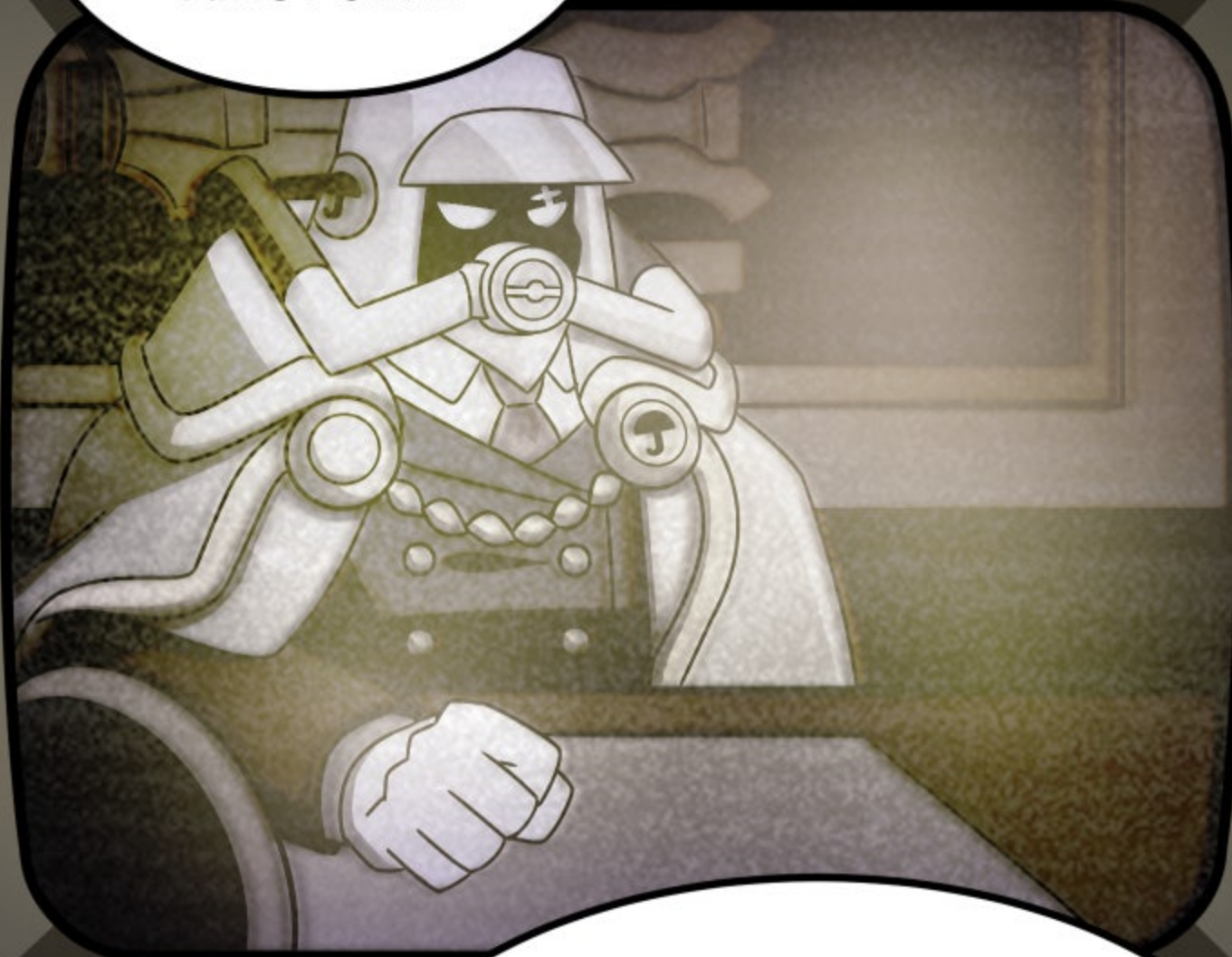




WE INTERRUPT THIS
REPORT FOR A ROYAL
PROCLAMATION LIVE
FROM RENOIR CASTLE.



PEOPLE OF
THE CANOPY
KINGDOM...



I KNOW MY APPEARANCE
MAY COME AS SOMEWHAT OF A
SHOCK AFTER SO MANY YEARS.
BUT IT IS NOT THE ONLY SHOCK
OUR PEOPLE HAVE EXPERIENCED

OF LATE.

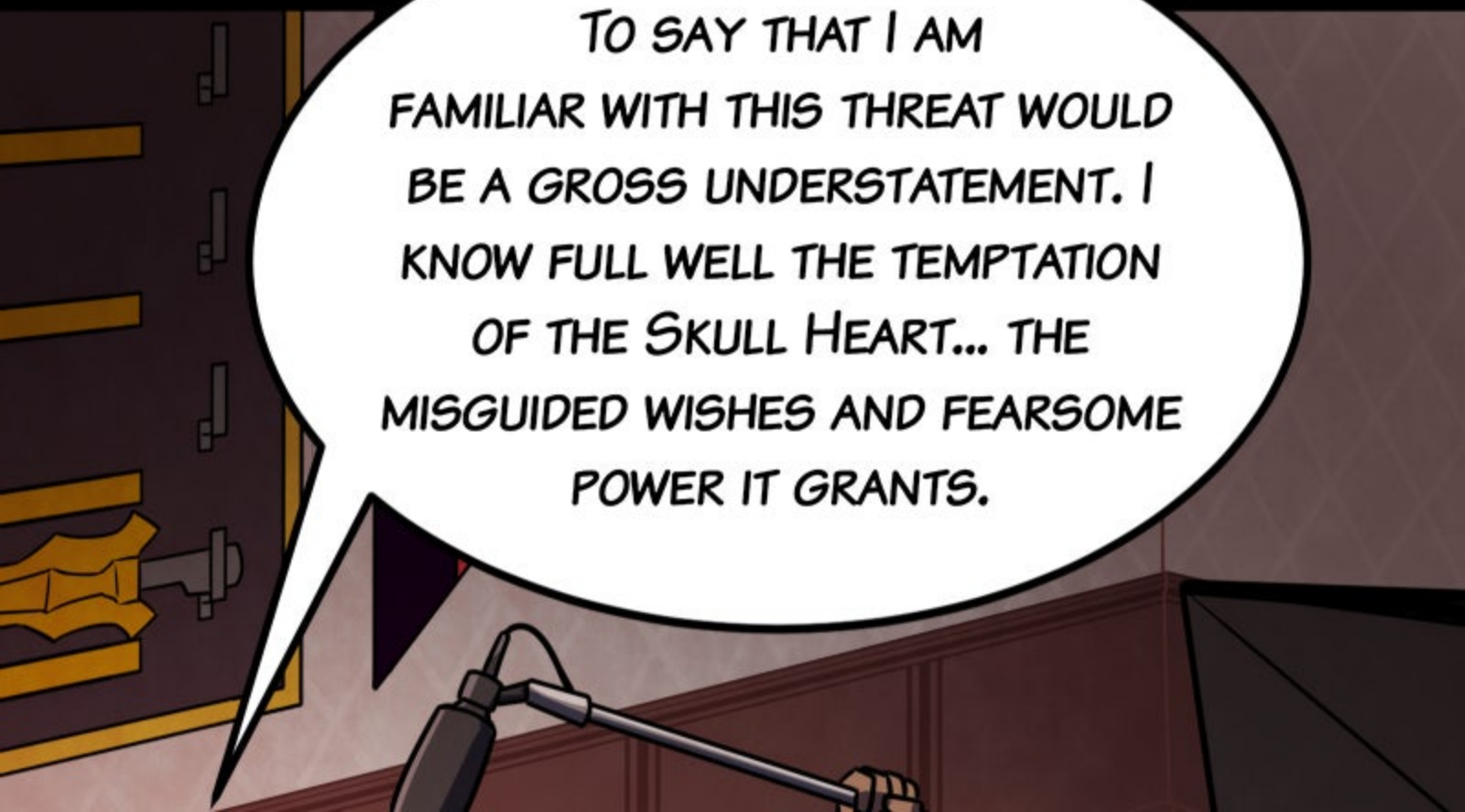
BY NOW MOST OF
YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE
HEINOUS ATTACK PERPETRATED
ON THE SUBURB OF MAPLECREST.
AN ATTACK CARRIED OUT BY THE
GRAVEST THREAT THIS WORLD
HAS EVER KNOWN.





THE SKULLGIRL.

TO SAY THAT I AM
FAMILIAR WITH THIS THREAT WOULD
BE A GROSS UNDERSTATEMENT. I
KNOW FULL WELL THE TEMPTATION
OF THE SKULL HEART... THE
MISGUIDED WISHES AND FEARSOME
POWER IT GRANTS.





WASN'T
HE DEAD?



THE COST TO OUR
PEOPLE, TO MY OWN
FAMILY, AND TO MYSELF
HAS BEEN ALMOST MORE
THAN I CAN BEAR.

BUT BEAR IT I SHALL,
FOR DESPITE THE CHANGES I'VE
UNDERGONE, I REMAIN
DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION
OF NOT ONLY THOSE DEAREST
TO MY HEART, BUT THE
ENTIRETY OF OUR REALM!



SLAM!

TO THAT END I HAVE RAISED
THE ALERT LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE
KINGDOM, AND HAVE BEGUN RAISING
MY ARMIES TO ELIMINATE THE
SKULLGIRL ONCE AND FOR ALL.



A CURFEW HAS BEEN PUT
INTO EFFECT. I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO
COOPERATE WITH THE AUTHORITIES, STAY
OFF THE STREETS AND IN YOUR HOMES.
KEEP YOUR FAMILIES SAFE, AND I WILL
ENDEAVOR TO DO THE SAME.





I GIVE YOU, EACH

AND ALL, MY SOLEMN OATH.
THE SKULLGIRL WILL PAY FOR
WHAT SHE'S DONE, AND WILL
TERRORIZE US NO LONGER.





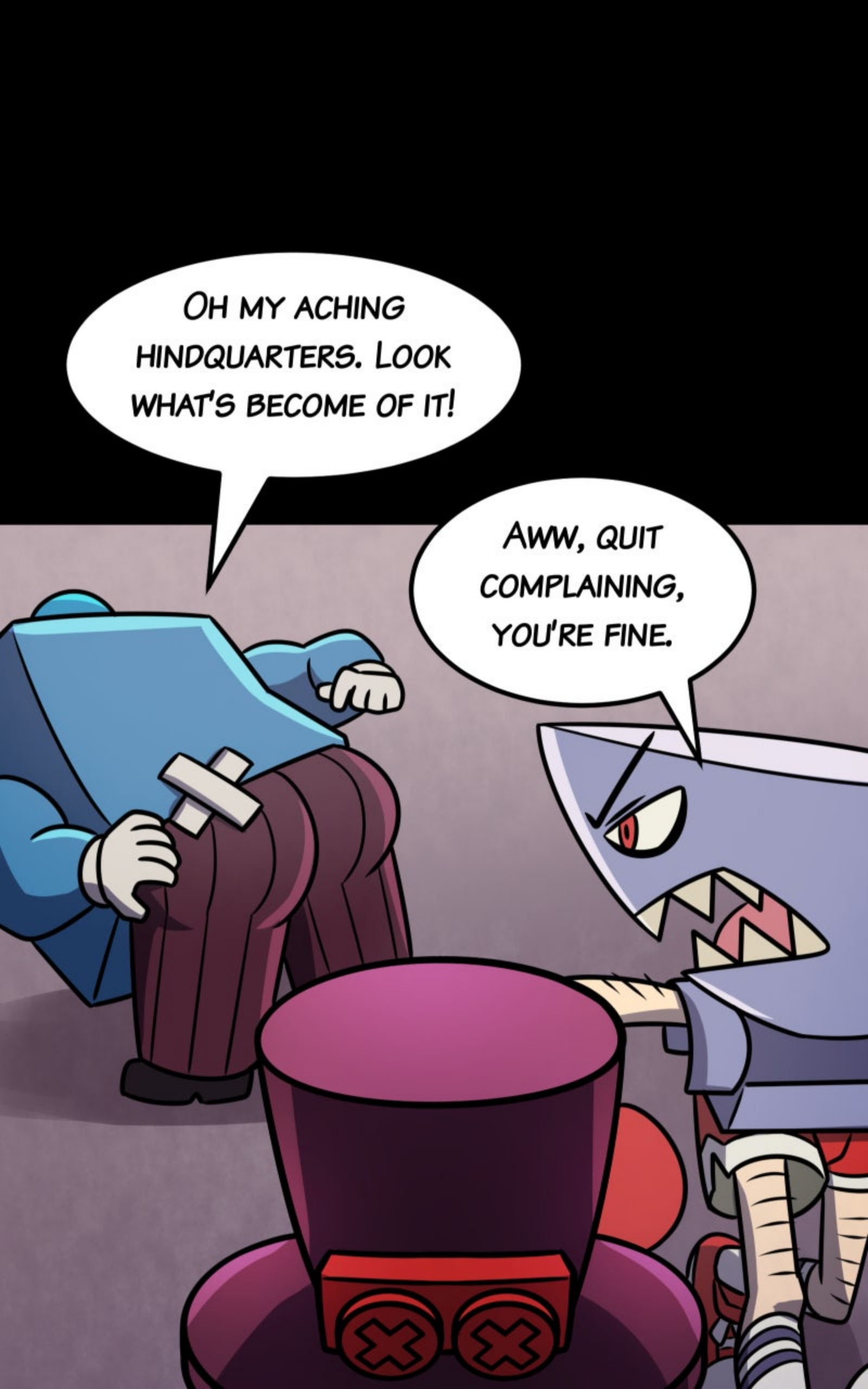


I WILL DO WHATEVER
IT TAKES TO SAFEGUARD
MY PEOPLE, NOT ONLY
FROM THE SKULLGIRL...

BUT ANY THREATS THAT
ARISE IN HER WAKE.







OH MY ACHING
HINDQUARTERS. LOOK
WHAT'S BECOME OF IT!

AWW, QUIT
COMPLAINING,
YOU'RE FINE.



BESIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE
ANYONE CAN TELL YOUR

REAR END FROM THE REST
OF YOUR UGLY MUG!

THONK

WHY YOU--

IT'S YOUR FAULT

I'M IN THIS STATE!
IF YOU HADN'T
PUSHED ME--

HEY, AREN'T I THE ONE
THAT BANDAGED YOU
UP OH SO TENDERLY?
YOU SHOULD BE
THANKING ME!

OH I'LL THANK
YOU, ALL RIGHT!
RIGHT UPSIDE
THE HEAD!







**WILL YOU TWO
PIPE DOWN
ALREADY!?**

I CAN'T HEAR MYSELF THINK!
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIGURE
OUT WHAT TO DO NEXT WITH YOUR
NON STOP YAMMERING IN MY
EARS!? IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZIER
THAN I ALREADY AM!





N-NOW, BOSS...
THERE'S NO NEED TO
GET PHYSICAL.

YEAH, WHY NOT TRY
AND, UH... THINK OF
YOUR HAPPY PLACE!





WHAT'D REALLY
MAKE ME HAPPY
IS GIVING YOU
YOUR LUMPS!
WHO'S FIRST?



RIIING
RIIING







FOR
ME?

SAVED BY THE BELL.
TO BE CONTINUED!



A character with orange hair, wearing a purple top hat with a red band featuring two red 'X' marks. They are wearing a red bow tie and holding a purple megaphone. In the foreground, a large white-gloved hand holds a striped object. The character has a surprised expression.

YEAH, WHO
IS IT?

A green-skinned character with red eyes and a headset is shouting into a microphone. The character has a determined, almost angry expression. The background is a server room with green monitors and equipment. A speech bubble contains the text "I THINK THAT MUCH SHOULD BE CLEAR, YOUNG LADY." To the left, there are stylized "Z"s and binary code, suggesting a sleeping or unconscious state.

I THINK THAT MUCH
SHOULD BE CLEAR,
YOUNG LADY.

ZZZ



OH HEY, DOC!
HOW'S TRICKS?

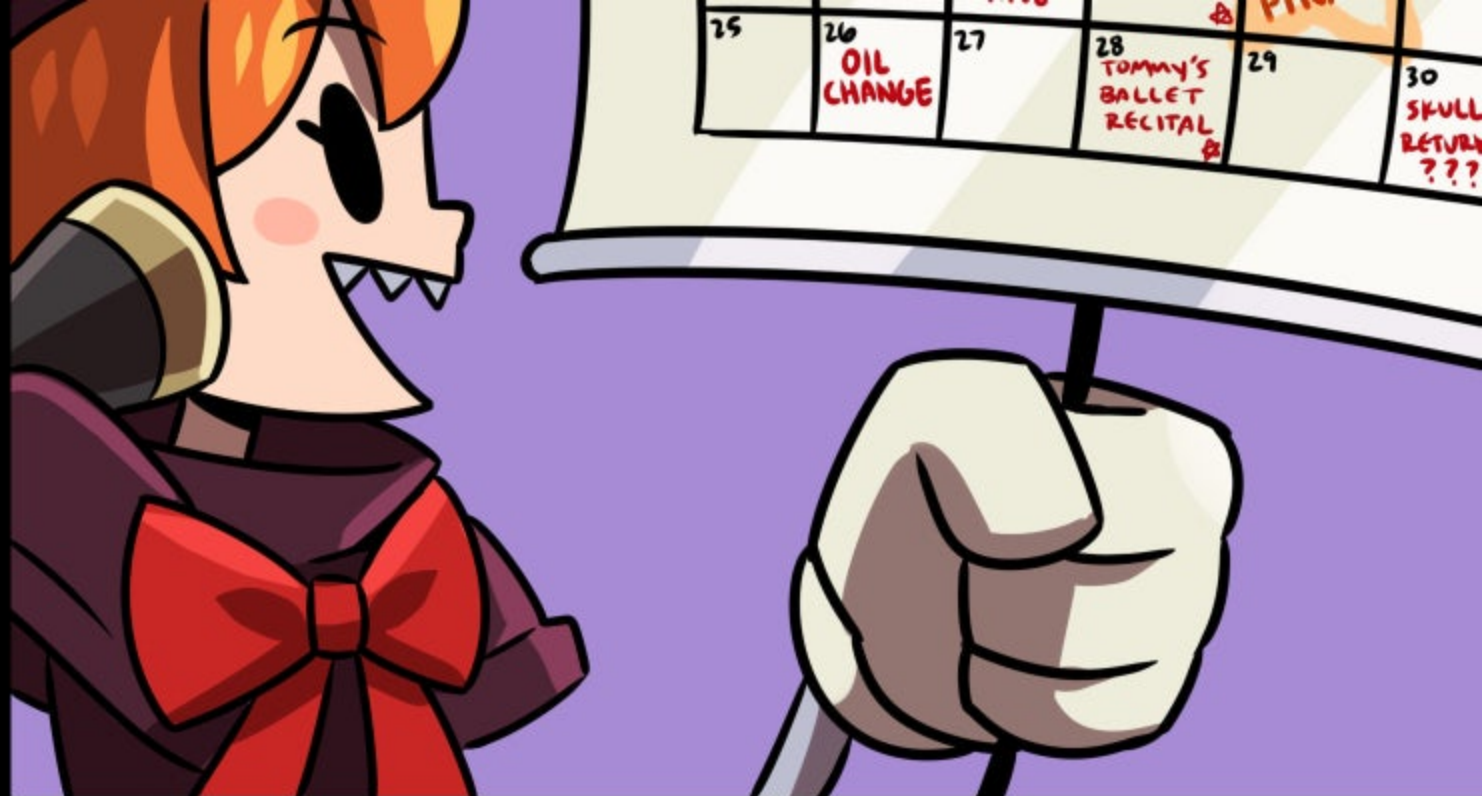






I TAKE IT IT'S NOT
FOR MY MONTHLY
CHECK-UP?

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FR
			GARBAGE DAY!! ☆	1	2
4 GEORGE PLAYDATE	5	6 BULLY LEDUC	7	8 ANDY'S BOXING MATCH ☆	9
11	12	13	14	15	16 CRY OVER MARI
18 GEORGE PLAYDATE	19	20 BULLY LEDUC W/ HIVE	21	22 ANNIE FINALE! ☆	23



HARDLY. I'VE BEEN
MONITORING THE EVENTS
UNFOLDING IN MAPLECREST ON
THE NEWS. A CATASTROPHE
THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN
AVERTED HAD YOU DEDICATED
YOURSELF SOLELY TO THE
TASK I ASSIGNED YOU.







FIRST THE REPORTS
OF YOU DISTURBING THE
PEACE AT THE CIRCUS,
THEN THE RUCKUS YOU
CAUSED AT A CASINO, OF
ALL PLACES. WHAT WERE
YOU THINKING?

HEY NOW, I'VE MADE
MISTAKES, SURE, BUT I'VE ALSO DONE
MY SHARE OF GOOD. I MIGHT HAVE

EVEN TAKEN OUT THE SKULLGIRL IF I
HADN'T FOUND OUT SHE HAPPENS TO
BE A FRIEND OF MINE!



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
YOU KNOW WHO THE
SKULLGIRL IS?

PEACOCK, IF THAT'S
TRUE WE NEED TO
REVISE OUR STRATEGY.
I'D LIKE YOU TO COME
BACK IN SO WE CAN
SPEAK IN PERSON!



DON'T THINK I CAN DO IT, DOC.
Y'SEE, MARIE IS MY BEST FRIEND IN
THE WORLD AND SHE'S IN A HEAP OF
TROUBLE. EVERY ROUGH AND TUMBLE
CUSTOMER IN THE ENTIRE CANOPY
KINGDOM WANTS HER HEAD, AND SHE'S
SO TWISTED UP WITH HATRED AND GUILT
THAT I KNOW SHE WON'T QUIT UNTIL
EITHER SHE'S DEAD, OR THEY ARE.



IF YOU THINK I'M
GOING TO LEAVE HER TO THEIR
NOT-SO-TENDER MERCIES THEN YOU
DON'T KNOW ME HALF AS WELL AS YOU
THINK! I'M NOT SURE IF MARIE CAN BE
SAVED, OR IF SHE'S PAST THE POINT OF
NO RETURN. BUT WHAT I DO KNOW IS I
AIM TO FIND OUT ONE WAY OR
ANOTHER.



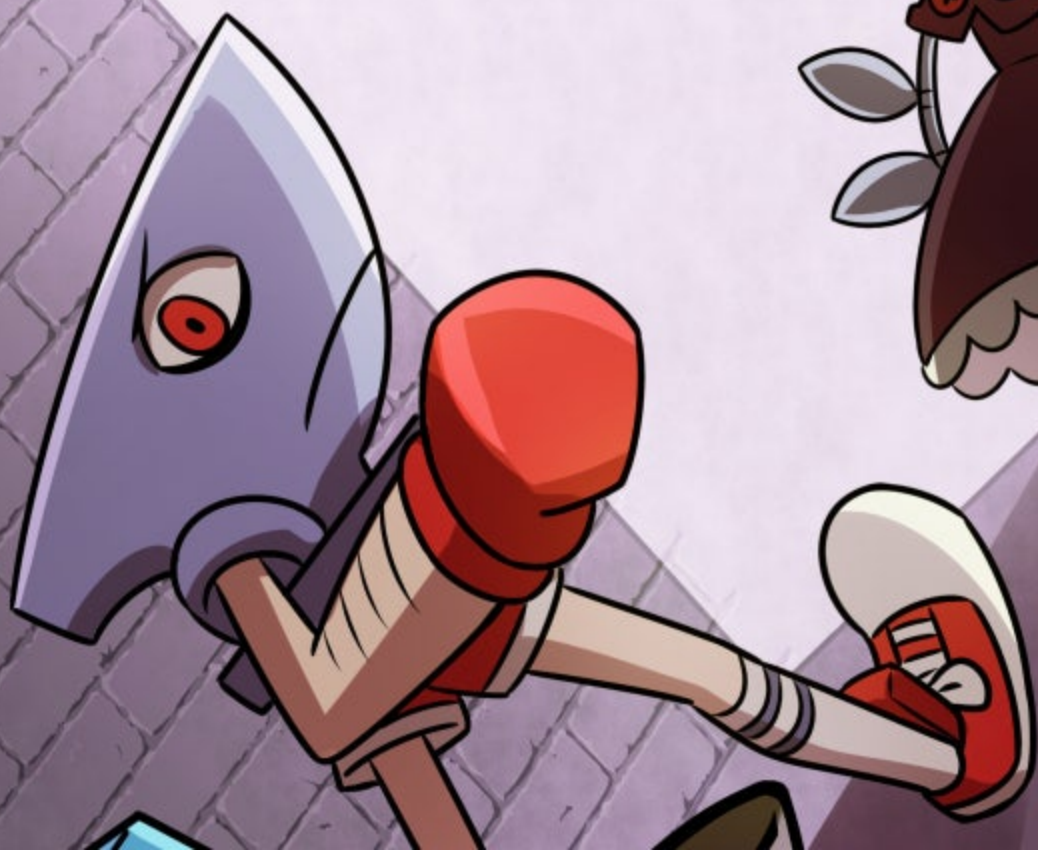


I GUESS
THAT'S ALL I'VE
GOT TO SAY.

SO LONG,
DOC. DON'T
CALL AGAIN.



PEACOCK, DON'T YOU
HANG UP! DO YOU HEAR
ME? ARE YOU THERE?





PEACOCK?!?



✎ CREDITS ✎



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